

City of Corunna  
Regular Council Meeting  
Tuesday, September 5, 2000

Present: Bayless, Bendall, Dumond, Hornus, Ockerman, Runyan.

Absent: Billis (excused).

Guests: Lisa Hitchcock, City Manager; Cheryl Kribs, Interim Parks & Recreation Director; Gene & Shirley Sanderson; Dick Sanderson; Fred & Betty Bates; Judy Horton; Don Runyon; Larry LeCureux; Officer Paul Richardson, Police Department; Donald & Pat Bearup; Jackie Leone, The Argus Press; and other concerned citizens.

The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chambers by Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS REGULAR MEETING: Hornus moved, Dumond seconded to approve the minutes of the previous regular meeting.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Ockerman, Dumond, Hornus, Runyan, Bayless, Bendall.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

AGENDA APPROVAL: Hornus moved, Dumond seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Bayless, Runyan, Bendall, Ockerman, Dumond, Hornus.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

APPROVAL OF VENDOR DISBURSEMENTS: Hornus moved, Dumond seconded to approve the vendor disbursements as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Ockerman, Bayless, Hornus, Bendall, Dumond.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CALL TO AUDIENCE: Donald Bearup stated he wanted to make a comment about the police department. He received a letter from Officer Kim Williams and felt it was a very insulting and assumptive letter. Mr. Bearup handed out and read a letter to council in response to the letter he received from Officer Williams. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall stated the letter was considered to be a form of a complaint and it would be dealt with in that manner. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall stated the situation would be investigated and someone would respond to his complaint.

Gene Sanderson stated he was ashamed at how the front of the city hall building looks. He further stated he knows someone would tell him there is nobody in the department of public works available but if council would take a look they would see a mass of weeds and uncared for property. He also stated council should be ashamed of themselves to have the city property look like it does and something should be done to it immediately. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall thanked Mr. Sanderson for his comment and advised him the situation would be addressed. Lisa Hitchcock advised there is a work order procedure and Mr. Sanderson is more than welcome to ask for a work order to be written. The situation can be addressed a lot quicker through the work order process.

Dick Sanderson stated the corner of Bachus and W. McNeil Street, which was dug up in April, has gravel there. There were two girls riding bicycles last week and they tipped over on the gravel. He further stated he called city hall two weeks ago to get something done, but he has not heard anything. Ms. Hitchcock advised the engineers are designing a sewer system for the area and the city needs to make sure the houses affected are able to connect to the sewer system before concreting the street again. Mr. Sanderson stated there is gravel laying all over the intersection and it should be cleaned up. Ms. Hitchcock advised she would check into the situation.

CONSIDER REQUEST FROM PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION: Dumond moved, Hornus seconded to actively advertise for an eight hour per week parks and recreation director. Councilperson Runyan asked if council was eliminating the last sentence of the parks and recreation commission's recommendation. Councilperson Bayless stated the parks and recreation commission was not recommending any kind of salary because it would be up to council to decide. He further stated the commission felt the position should be a salary position instead a contractual position. The only way the position should be a contractual position was if the person hired has multiple clients like an assessor and building inspector does. He also stated the commission felt the position falls in the guidelines of a salary position. The commission was not recommending any changes in the duties and responsibilities; it was recommending that the position be filled. Councilperson Dumond stated the city might be able to get someone who does have other clients. Councilperson Ockerman stated he was opposed to the position. It is a big town idea with a small town budget. He further stated the job used to be done by the front office before a permanent part-time employee was hired three years ago. The city has added productivity through software and faster computers so the job could be done easier by the front office than it was before. He also stated the city keeps hiring police officers and front office staff when the money should be spent on hiring department of public works workers. As far as he was concerned, the money could be better spent on sidewalks and broken down streets. Councilperson Hornus stated when the office help was doing the work there was not a lot of activity going on in the park. Now, the park is starting to get some income coming in from activities held down there and he thought it was clearly due to the parks and recreation director the city has had. Councilperson Runyan stated there should be some guidelines established on how many hours the person would work. Councilperson Bayless stated the commission has recommended a minimum of eight hours per week. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall suggested adding when the office hours would be to the job description. Ms. Hitchcock stated that

was something that should be negotiated with the person selected for the position and agreed there should be set hours. The city has to work around the people sharing that office space. Councilperson Runyan stated the city should tell the person when to work instead of the person telling the city when he or she could work. Ms. Hitchcock stated it depends if the city is able to get anybody. The person might have another job that has to be worked around. She further stated three people applied for the position the first time it was advertised, but two of them pulled their applications. It is part of administration and if council wants to fill the position then she does not feel council should worry about when somebody is here because it is her worry and not council's. She also stated when the position was approved three years ago, the city did not run the summer baseball/softball program like it does now. Ms. Hitchcock advised when the city has community center or pavilion rentals the facilities need to be checked the day after the event. Councilperson Hornus asked Mrs. Kribs how many hours she put into the job. Mrs. Kribs advised she put in forty or more hours per week the first month. Eight hours were spent in the office and the other hours were spent at home going through the files to familiarize herself with the job.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Hornus, Bendall, Dumond, Bayless.

No: Ockerman, Runyan.

Motion CARRIED

Councilperson Runyan stated he believed the Mayor Pro-Tem could not vote. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall advised the Mayor Pro-Tem could vote. Councilperson Runyan asked if the charter was being changed. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall advised it was in the charter. Councilperson Runyan stated he heard the charter was revised to give the Mayor Pro-Tem the right to vote. Ms. Hitchcock advised the wording in the charter was being clarified. She further advised the Mayor Pro-Tem has always voted. Councilperson Runyan apologized.

CONSIDER FINANCIAL CONSULTING AGREEMENT: Ockerman moved, Hornus seconded to accept the financial consulting agreement with First of Michigan in the amount of \$6,000 plus cap any reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses at \$500.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Bendall, Bayless, Runyan, Dumond, Hornus, Ockerman.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER DEFICIT REDUCTION PLAN: Dumond moved, Hornus seconded to accept the deficit reduction plan for the Corunna Historical Commission as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Dumond, Hornus, Ockerman, Bendall, Runyan, Bayless.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER KUBOTA ENGINE REPAIR: Councilperson Ockerman asked if the Kubota

engine was diesel or gasoline. Ms. Hitchcock advised she believed it was gasoline. Councilperson Ockerman asked if there was a maintenance program for changing oil, filters, etc. Ms. Hitchcock advised yes. There was a filter found in a place that did not show and these mowers take more wear and tear when there are seasonal employees using them. Councilperson Ockerman stated he understood that and that is why he was asking the questions he was asking. He asked if there was someone specific who looks after the equipment. Ms. Hitchcock advised yes, Rick Holzheuer is the city mechanic. Councilperson Ockerman asked if a maintenance program goes by the number of hours on a piece of equipment. Ms. Hitchcock advised yes, the equipment is maintained by hours. Councilperson Ockerman asked if a record was kept on the number of hours a piece of equipment is used. Ms. Hitchcock advised yes, the city has a regular maintenance schedule, and a log is kept anytime a piece of equipment is worked on. Councilperson Ockerman asked how many hours the piece of equipment has been used. Ms. Hitchcock advised she did not know. Councilperson Ockerman asked how many hours it would take to take the engine apart to replace the block. Ms. Hitchcock advised the engine has already been taken apart. Councilperson Ockerman asked how many hours had been invested to take the engine apart. Ms. Hitchcock advised she would have to check Mr. Holzheuer's time card. Councilperson Ockerman asked if Mr. Holzheuer had done this type of work before. Ms. Hitchcock advised yes, he is a licensed mechanic. Councilperson Ockerman asked how old the Kubota was. Ms. Hitchcock advised she believed it was two years old. Councilperson Ockerman stated good lord, it just does not make sense. Ms. Hitchcock stated she would have to investigate the situation to answer his questions. Councilperson Ockerman stated the city could not afford to replace engines every two years. Ms. Hitchcock stated Mr. Crawford has assured her that the problem was with the filter that no one knew about. Councilperson Ockerman stated if Mr. Holzheuer is the person who is assigned to do the work then he ought to have some common knowledge and be able to find the filter. He further stated he was not comfortable with having to replace an engine every two years and wants something done to make sure it will not have to be done again in the future. If the engine has to be replaced within two years then something was not done right. He asked Ms. Hitchcock if she could come back with some kind of a plan showing what would be done in the future. Ms. Hitchcock advised yes. Councilperson Ockerman asked what Mr. Crawford does to check out this kind of work and to make sure Mr. Holzheuer is doing his job. Ms. Hitchcock advised Mr. Crawford checks Mr. Holzheuer's time card to see what is being done. Mr. Holzheuer works in the water department and as a mechanic. Councilperson Ockerman stated he just wants responsibility to be somewhere, but council is at a point where it has no choice. He further stated he does not have enough answers to make a decision. Councilperson Runyan asked if Mr. Crawford got a price on what a new machine would cost. Ms. Hitchcock advised approximately \$14,000 to \$15,000. Councilperson Runyan stated council needs some answers before taking any action. He asked where the machine was used. Ms. Hitchcock advised it is used for mowing and to plow snow on the sidewalks. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall asked council if anyone was

comfortable enough to make a motion. Dumond moved, Hornus seconded to approve the purchase of a new block, pistons, rings, gaskets, seals and bearings in the amount of \$2,400. Councilperson Bayless asked how a delay would effect mowing if a decision

was postponed for two weeks. Ms. Hitchcock advised mowing is being done with one mower.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Dumond, Hornus, Bayless, Bendall.

No: Ockerman, Runyan.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER VERIZON MAINTENANCE PLAN: Bayless moved, Runyan seconded to accept the proposal for the annual Verizon maintenance plan in the amount of \$523.92.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Bayless, Runyan, Bendall, Ockerman, Dumond, Hornus.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER PROPOSAL TO PERFORM A CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION

STUDY: Councilperson Dumond informed council the labor committee had met twice. The first time the committee met they interviewed the city's four supervisory personnel. He stated the committee asked the personnel if they had any wishes and what their expectations for the coming year were. Ms. Hitchcock was then asked to leave the room and the committee asked the personnel if they had any problems with the department management, city hall, Ms. Hitchcock or with anyone else and there were no major problems. He further stated after speaking with the personnel, the committee went home and gave the situation considerable thought. Councilperson Dumond advised the labor committee met again to discuss what they would like to see for the employees. There was discussion about setting salary caps and about a five to ten year compensation plan. He further advised after two hours of discussion, the committee realized they needed to come to council to ask for professional help since none of the committee was skilled enough in knowing how to establish a compensation schedule for the city employees. He also advised the committee asked Ms. Hitchcock to contact the Michigan Municipal League to see what they could do to help out the committee. At this point, council has a recommendation from the Michigan Municipal League and the committee would like to see some sort of professional help along this line to help guide the committee not only this year but for the years to come. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall asked council if they wanted to continue discussion on the issue or if someone wanted to make a motion.

Councilperson Ockerman stated he wanted more discussion. He further stated he was really interested in what the two council people, who agreed with him last year on setting salary caps even though they voted for the raises at the time, had to say and asked Councilpersons Hornus and Bayless for their input. Councilperson Hornus suggested changing the wording from salary cap to salary range to make it sound a little sweeter. Councilperson Bayless stated he reviewed the information from the Michigan Municipal League in detail. In his job position, he evaluates employees but does not set salaries. He further stated he was familiar with comparing jobs that are similar with point values. The proposal from the Michigan Municipal League is really comprehensive and would benefit the city. He also stated he thought the study would be very worthwhile and he understands from the questions he asked the city manager that the entire three person committee was in favor of the study. If the plan is done, then council has to agree to

follow the plan because if the plan is not followed then the city will be throwing away money. Councilperson Ockerman asked Councilpersons Hornus and Bayless if they were really not in favor of salary caps. Councilperson Bayless stated the city needs a long-range plan and he would personally like to see a ten-year plan. There would be some type of formula available that could be used to find out how much a person is worth. He further stated council needs to know where the wages will get to in ten years and he was in favor of long-range planning. He also stated the employees will also know what they can look forward to and council will have a plan to follow when negotiating contracts. Councilperson Ockerman stated it would cost \$400 per position to do the study, which is about one-percent of the department heads annual salaries. He further stated in his opinion, it would be a waste of the taxpayer's money. He also stated there are a lot of people he knows out in the real world that have not had a raise in several years and they are just thankful to have a job. The money and benefits that are given to the employees are outstanding and he stated again he was in favor of salary caps, which is not the same as a range, and was opposed to the proposal. Councilperson Runyan explained that Councilperson Bayless stated a plan is needed. Employees and their education would be reviewed and compensation would be set at the range of education a person has. Councilperson Runyan further explained it was also stated if the city is going to do the study then the city needs to stick by it. Corunna is a town of 3,000 people and if this plan is done then the city would end up with a person who is over qualified and the city's budget could not afford that person. Councilperson Runyan stated a person has a choice to educate himself or herself each year through a fringe benefit, which is great, but if education is going to govern how much a person will be paid then council has no control. Ms. Hitchcock stated it was her understanding the salary ranges the Michigan Municipal Leagues speaks about in the proposal are based on the education needed for the position and not the education a person has. Councilperson Ockerman stated the proposal was not budgeted and council has to come up with a minimum of \$2,000. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall stated the \$400 fee could be charged back to each department. Councilperson Ockerman stated it does not mean that it was budgeted; it just means that is where it will be charged. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall asked Ms. Hitchcock if a budget amendment was necessary. Ms. Hitchcock advised no. Councilperson Runyan stated two of the job descriptions are pretty well clarified in the city charter and asked why the city has to pay someone to review the job descriptions. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall stated the labor committee only asked for a compensation study and writing job descriptions was part of the proposal. She further stated she feels the money would be well spent because she sat in the meeting and no one felt qualified, and it was unanimous, to set a cap or salary range. Councilperson Ockerman stated he did not believe the committee was giving itself a whole lot of credit. The committee is just as qualified as everyone else who is sitting on the council. Councilperson Dumond stated he and Councilperson Bendall sat in the meeting for one and one-half hours and voiced their opinions and that is all of the input that was received. At the end of the meeting, he and Councilperson Bendall were informed by Mayor Billis that he had to think it over but he would probably veto it. Ms. Hitchcock stated the city has job descriptions on file. In the conversation she had with the Michigan Municipal League, the job descriptions would be reviewed to make sure they comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act and they would recommend any changes that are required. Councilperson Runyan asked if the

negotiations are open to the public. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall advised anything council discusses would be open to the public. Councilperson Runyan stated he asked if the labor negotiations with the employees would be a closed meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall stated the committee's task as laid out by the council was to make recommendations to the council. The committee would not have any rights to agree to anything and any decision council made would be in an open meeting. She further stated the committee did not negotiate anything. It just received information in order to make a recommendation to council. Councilperson Hornus stated council makes the final decision. Councilperson Runyan stated that was true but the committee was negotiating something to bring to council. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall stated the committee met for fact finding. Councilperson Runyan stated the committee met alone with the employees to discuss negotiations. Mayor Pro-Tem Bendall stated discussion occurred back and forth and it was only a fact-finding meeting. Councilperson Dumond stated no offers were ever made. Councilperson Runyan stated if this was a closed meeting then the committee was negotiating. Councilperson Dumond stated the committee only met for fact finding. Councilperson Bayless stated there is a lot of training available so a person can get better at what they are doing and he has seen people leave because they are trained so well that they get better offers. He further stated paying an employee a little bit extra to keep them would save the city money in the long run. It can be really frustrating to get questions answered when there are new employees who are not up to speed. Councilperson Ockerman asked Ms. Hitchcock to get him a current year salary for herself, Ms. Long, and Mr. Hetfield including the last three years. Councilperson Ockerman asked when he would receive the information. Ms. Hitchcock advised she could probably get him the information by the end of the week. Councilperson Runyan stated he would like a total of all of the fringe benefits the salaried employees received for last year. Ms. Hitchcock asked Councilperson Runyan if he wanted information on what it is costing the city or what the benefit level is. Councilperson Runyan advised he wanted information on what it is costing the city for educational costs, co-pays, etc. Councilperson Ockerman stated he would also like a copy of the information. Ms. Hitchcock advised she would give a copy of the information to all of the council members. Councilperson Bayless stated he believes the city employees are well compensated and the city compares favorably to other communities the same size. He further stated he was not looking at the study as a way to get a whole bunch of money to the employees. He believes a study is needed in order to see how the employees stand up against the responsibilities they perform. He also stated he believes the study will show that the city does not need to increase wages a great deal in the short term, but he is looking for putting in a long-term plan so the city is fair. He hopes the city employees can see that they do have it good here and be very pleased with where they stand and that is what he would like to see the plan show. Councilperson Bayless advised he does not know what the results will be, but he would like to think the city is in a good position regardless of who is sitting in the council chairs. Councilperson Hornus stated the people on the council and the citizens of Corunna would be very amazed at what it would cost to hire another city manager. Councilperson Dumond stated the city advertised for a city treasurer a year and a half ago and one of the applicants wanted a salary in the range of \$65,000 to \$85,000. The city was lucky to hire an uneducated man who was in a program to get educated. Councilperson Ockerman stated what Councilperson Bayless wanted was like a utopia

because if there is a council change the new council might think differently than he does. Councilperson Bayless advised the new council might choose not to follow the plan. Dumond moved, Bayless seconded to engage the services of the Michigan Consulting Services at \$400.00 per position to perform a classification and compensation study for the five supervisory positions in an amount not to exceed \$2,300. Councilperson Hornus stated he would like to see the study happen because he wants to know where the city was at with salary ranges for the city employees at the present time. Ms. Hitchcock stated every clerk and department of works director have different responsibilities and this study could be used to compare like duties and would be very beneficial. However, she told Councilpersons Dumond and Bendall and Mayor Billis, this was a council decision. She further stated it would be a great tool for her to use if hiring was needed in the future. After the committee asked her to research it, she gave the committee an estimated cost, but once she found out the actual cost, she contacted the mayor the next morning, and was told that he was in support of doing the study as he was before. Councilperson Ockerman stated he wanted to remind council and the public that this was only the second month of the new budget and this motion would raise the budget because the item was not budgeted. Ms. Hitchcock advised there were two purchases on the last agenda that came in under budget. Councilperson Bayless stated the study would be used as a long-term professional plan and it would take some of the heat off of the city council in the future when deciding which way to go. The city would be getting a professional recommendation to follow as a guideline.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Bayless, Hornus, Bendall, Dumond.

No: Runyan, Ockerman.

Motion CARRIED

CALL TO AUDIENCE: Gene Sanderson stated as divided as the council has been and would always be, the people getting these raises can sit back and say “boy, we’ve got it made”. He further stated he does not think the people of Corunna are being treated fairly as taxpayers. He also stated the comment made by Councilperson Dumond about the mayor saying it would be vetoed anyway shows total respect for the mayor again. Councilperson Dumond stated he repeated the mayor’s exact words and was not exaggerating. Mr. Sanderson asked if vetoing was one of the mayor’s powers. Councilperson Dumond advised yes. He further advised the committee got absolutely nowhere during the two hours they met and the mayor did not say anything.

Judy Horton asked if council decides to incorporate a plan and the next council does not want it if there was anyway this council can say this is the way it is going to be. Ms. Hitchcock advised council could not lock future councils into any decisions other than bonding, which the residents have a right to vote on. Ms. Horton asked how many new council people get information from the prior council people. Ms. Hitchcock stated she hoped they all did and usually there is some type of orientation meeting after an election. Ms. Horton stated this council could spend money to set up a plan and asked if the next council could change it. Councilperson Bayless advised yes, the administration would administer the plan until it is changed but nothing would change automatically; it would have to be changed by a council vote.



Gene Sanderson stated he had a letter dated in 1997 from Ms. Hitchcock pertaining to the railroad clean-up on S. Shiawassee Street and the railroad ties were only moved once and asked if she heard anything more from Representative Julian on what he is doing with the railroad. Ms. Hitchcock stated she has not heard from Representative Julian, but she has heard from the railroad representative who told her they would be at the railroad within a month to cut the brush back.

Dick Sanderson stated he thought it was a shame that four of the council people try to fight with Councilpersons Runyan and Ockerman on everything they want to do.

ADJOURN: Hornus moved to adjourn.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Hornus, Bendall, Dumond, Bayless, Ockerman, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED Time was 8:21 p.m.

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DEBORAH BENDALL, MAYOR PRO-TEM

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YVONNE F. LONG, CITY CLERK